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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 26, 2016

**Gov. Shumlin Statement on House Action Calling for Divestment**

**MONTPELIER** – Gov. Peter Shumlin issued the following statement after the House passed a resolution calling on the Vermont Pension Investment Committee (VPIC) to divest the state of coal and ExxonMobil stocks. The Governor made the call for divestment in his State of the State Address. Earlier this week he addressed VPIC to urge them to act quickly to divest the state of coal and ExxonMobil assets.

“I am pleased that the House has acted and joined me in calling on VPIC to rid our state of coal and ExxonMobil assets. I want to thank House Speaker Shap Smith for his leadership on this issue. Shap has been a strong voice on climate change and I appreciate his effort to marshal the House to get this done.

“I have never expected that divestment would happen overnight. But now that the House has spoken, I expect VPIC to put in place a serious process that ends in the selling of Vermont’s coal and ExxonMobil stocks.

“As a matter of moral and financial responsibility, there is absolutely no reason that Vermont should own either. According to NASA, January was the warmest month on record, capping off the warmest three month period on record. In Vermont, all it takes is one look outside to see the effects of those trends. Just this week, Vermonters experience widespread temperature swings and experienced intense flooding. Some of our ski areas have shut their doors temporarily to preserve snow. Even some Vermont sugaring operations have started making maple syrup. Climate change is here and it is changing the Vermont that we love.

“The time for debate is over. It’s time to act to do everything we can to help preserve our planet for future generations.”

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